(d) if the answer to part (b) above be in affirmative, what corrective measures had been initiated against the persons responsible for the same, as these incidents are tarnishing the image of the Postal Department?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes Sir.

(b) On enquiries, the original money order was found not paid to the payee, A duplicate money order was got issued and the amount was paid back to the remitter on 23.2.99.

(c) In view of (b) above, does not arise.

(d) Following corrective measures have been intiated by the Department to avoid recurrence of such irregularities:—

(i) Postmaster General, Dehradun Region has been asked to thoroughly investigate the matter, fix responsibility on the part of the officials responsible for this delay and taken suitable action against them. He has also been asked to thoroughly review the entire Public Grievances Redressal Machinery in Dehradun Region, more particularly in Dehradun Division.

(ii) As a result of the investigations made by the Postmaster General, Dehradun Region, two Postal Assistants found responsible for delay in payment of the aforesaid money order, have been transferred out of station and disciplinary proceedings initiated against them. Two Senior Postmasters working at Dehradun Head Post Office found responsible for administrative lapses have also been identified for suitable action against them.

Setting up of a National Internet Backbone

1433. SHRI PARMESHWAR KUMAR AGARWALLA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Department of Telecommunications is setting up a national internet backbone;

(b) if so, what are its features;

(c) what is the estimated investment on this project;

(d) what are the details thereof; and

(e) when it is expected to come into force?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Department of Telecommunications has planned to set up a National Internet Backbone (NIB) covering all parts of the country. This backbone, to start with, will have a capacity of 8 Mbps and go upto 155 Mbps by the year 2000. 6 Nodes will have international connectivity at 34 Mbps. The NIB will act as a transmission media to carry the Internet traffic both Government and Private to the nearest International Gateway. It will also act as a facilitator for Internet Service Provider (ISP) to ISP interconnection within the country besides facilitating roaming.

(c) Rs. 86.00 Crores.

(d) National Internet Backbone (NIB) is proposed to have multi-tier structure consisting of 3 tiers. The first tier of NIB will consist of large stations with high capacity digital trunks with highest level of redunlancy. Type B and C nodes shall be smaller nodes with lesser access requirements. In addition, DOT proposes to have Remote Access Server to serve Internet Dial UP Subscribers in 45 locations consisting of 14 type A nodes and 31 Type B nodes in the first phase for which the tenders have been floated. This Internet Backbone is expected to

serve about one million subscribers by the year 2000. The estimated cost for setting up National Internet Backbone alongwith equipments for the 45 nodes is Rs. 86.00 crores approximately which is to be met from Internal Finance of DOT.

(e) By the end of December, 1999.

STD/ISD/PCO Facilities in Rural Areas of Gujarat

1434. SHRIMATI URMILABEN CHIMANBHAI PATEL: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ISD/STD/PCO facilities have been extended in all the rural areas of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) by what time these facilities will be made available to those rural areas where the facilities have not been extended?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House as soon as possible.

Opening of Post Offices in remote tribal areas

1435. SHRI SANJAY NIRUPAM: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of Post Offices in the country at present;

(b) the average population of the country covered by one Post Office;

(c) whether Government propose to open more Post Offices;

(d) if so, the details in this regard; and

(e) whether Government propose to open more Post Offices in remote tribal areas of the country; if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) The total number of post offices in the country is 153454.

(b) The average population of the country covered by one post office is 5502.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) There is a target for opening 598 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 50 Departmental Sub-Post Offices throughout the country during the Annual Plan 1998-99, subject to justification and availability of resources.

(e) Yes, Sir. During the Annual Plan 1998-99, there is a target for opening 148 Extra Departmental Branch Post Offices and 9 Departmental Sub-Post Offices in the tribal areas of the country, subject to norm based justification and availability of resources.

Telephone faults

1436. SHRI KULDIP NAYYAR: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) on an average how many complaints of telephone faults are registered per day with the Exchanges in Delhi;

(b) how much time is normally spent to rectify one fault; and

(c) whether any lineman or other telephone employee had been punished during the last year for not doing his duty quickly?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI KABINDRA PURKAYASTHA): (a) In MTNL, Delhi on an average sixteen thousand complaints are booked every day.

(b) About 72.5% faults are cleared within the norms i.e. 48 hours. The average duration for clearance of a fault is about 41 hours.